

## **Di121 Effective Communication**

### ***Lesson Di121-7 Direction for Communication***

Suppose you wanted to visit family members in a distant city. After deciding to travel, what is the next thing you would do? You would have to decide whether to travel by train, bus, or car. Who will you trust to get you where you want to go? The obvious answer is, someone who already knows the way. As believers in Jesus, we need to learn to trust the Spirit of God to get us where he wants us to go. This story tells about how early believers trusted the Spirit and were led to exactly where they needed to be to testify about Jesus.

In Acts chapter eight we learn about a great move of God's Spirit in the region of Samaria. In response to the preaching of Philip, the evangelist, many people experienced salvation. God used Philip to deliver the demon-possessed and heal the paralyzed and lame. Peter and John came from Jerusalem to learn more about what was happening there. They instructed and prayed for the new believers, who then were baptized in the Holy Spirit.

In the middle of all this excitement, God spoke to Philip, saying, "Go south to the desert road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian man. He was an important official in charge of all the treasury of the queen of Ethiopia. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship. On his way home he was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit told Philip; "Go to that chariot and stay near it" (Acts 8:26-29).

Philip did not know where the Spirit of God might lead him. What he had learned was to trust the leading of the Spirit. And the Spirit knew he could trust Philip, because he had already obeyed and gone to Samaria. The revival in Samaria was touching many people in that city. This Ethiopian was just one person, a foreigner, but he was still just as important to God. God took his servant away from the crowds to testify to one individual. By his example, Philip teaches that we must trust the leading of the Spirit as we communicate today in our setting.

Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked.

"How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus (Acts 8:30-35).

What Philip knew is still true today. When the Spirit sends a believer to reach a lost person, two things will happen. First, he prepares the messenger. Second, he prepares the one who will receive the message. In this case the man was reading one of the most powerful Old Testament passages about Jesus. Philip began with this passage and told him the stories of the life of Jesus. The Ethiopian believed that Jesus is God's Son, whom Isaiah wrote about. After Philip baptized the man in water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away. The Ethiopian did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing (Acts 8:36-39).

Philip knew he needed the direction of the Holy Spirit for him to fully communicate the gospel of Jesus. He worked in partnership with the Spirit. The Spirit prepared the heart of this lost man, and Philip explained the truth to him. As Philip worked together with the Spirit, this man came to a full faith in Jesus.

Not long after Philip's experience, the apostle Peter had a similar divine appointment. As he was praying on a rooftop in Joppa, the Lord prepared his heart by giving him a vision. Meanwhile, God had also spoken to a Gentile man in Caesarea by the name of Cornelius. He told him to send for Peter and listen to what he would say. So again, the Spirit spoke to the messenger Peter telling him to go. And he spoke to Cornelius, preparing his heart to receive the message of Peter. As a result of God's moving on both the sender and the receiver of this communication, all Cornelius' Gentile household believed on Jesus. They were baptized in the Holy Spirit—speaking in tongues and praising God. Peter then baptized them in water. Believers throughout Judea understood then that the Gentiles also had received the word of God (Acts 10).

Do not be reluctant or afraid when God tells you to share the truth about Jesus with an unbeliever. Fear does not come from God. The Holy Spirit is with you to direct your steps and give you courage to witness. He is also there to open the heart of the person he is calling you to reach. He works on both ends of the communication!

This story is **important** because it demonstrates the partnership that should exist between the Spirit and a believer who is listening for his direction. God also prepares the hearts of those who will receive the message. People will accept Christ as you are obedient to the Spirit's voice.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that to be effective in proclaiming the gospel we must be directed and empowered by the Spirit, not our human understanding.

Let's **review** this lesson—

1. Who was it that directed Philip to leave Samaria and go down the road to meet the man from Ethiopia? [Pause]  
A. If you said, "The Spirit of God directed Philip," you answered correctly.
2. How had the Spirit of God already prepared the Ethiopian man to talk with Philip? [Pause]  
A. If you said that the man was prepared because he was reading what Isaiah had written about Jesus, you are correct.
3. According to this lesson, how can we communicate most effectively? [Pause]  
A. If you said that we communicate most effectively when we listen to and obey the Spirit, you are right.
4. What other story in the Book of Acts teaches the same lesson about God preparing both the sender and receiver of the message? [Pause]  
A. If you answered that God prepared both the apostle Peter and the Gentile Cornelius before he brought them together, you are correct.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to memorize the two stories and tell them to some new Christians who have not heard them before. Encourage them that God, the Holy Spirit, wants to direct them and empower them to share the truth about Jesus. The Spirit will also prepare the heart of the person who will receive their witness. After telling the two stories, ask your friends to share a personal experience. Have they ever heard God's voice and obeyed? Or have they heard God's voice and did not obey because of fear that the person would not listen. After discussing their experiences, pray together. Ask God to help each one to hear the voice of the Spirit and to give them boldness to speak in Jesus' name. God will provide the divine encounters.